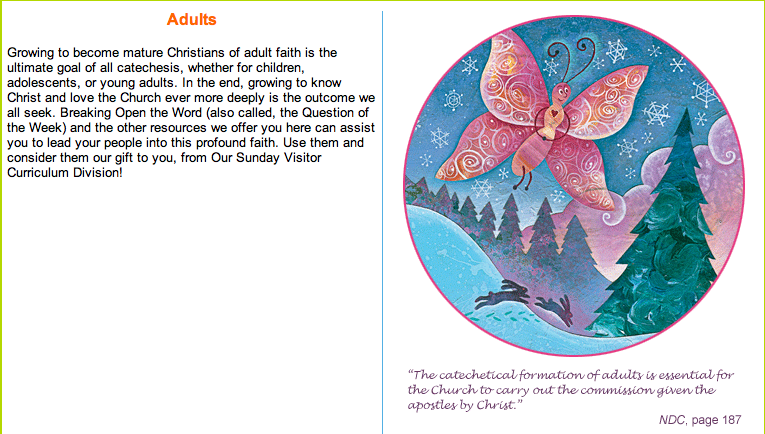
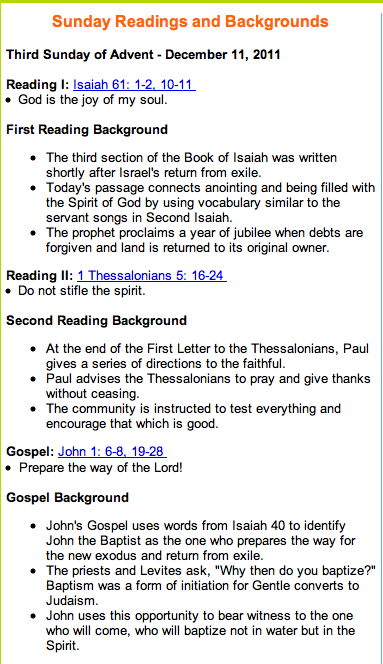
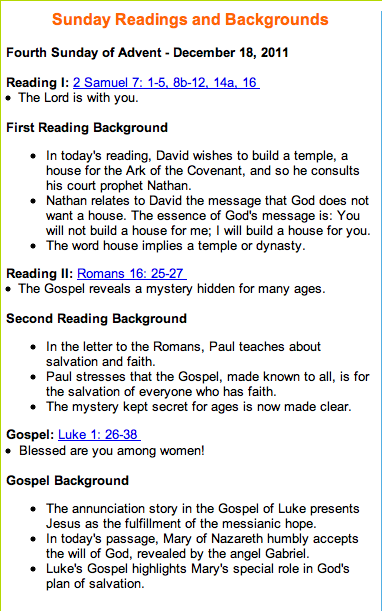
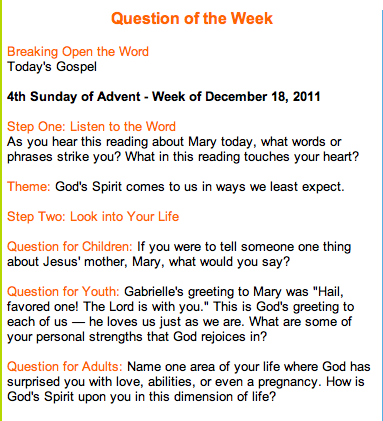
**BREAKING OPEN THE WORD**



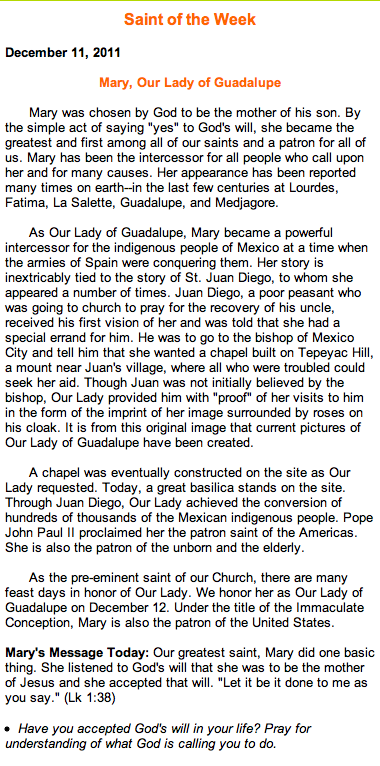








<http://www.osvcurriculum.com/lifelong_catechesis/intro.html>



The meaning of the Christmas Song: 12 Days of Christmas: In England from 1558 to 1829, Catholics were not permitted to practice their faith openly. The message of the song’s gifts was to help children remember lessons of their faith. The true love mentioned in the song is God Himself, the 'me' is every baptized person. - The partridge is one of those birds who feigns injury to decoy predators away from her helpless nestlings - this symbolizes Christ.

* Two turtledoves - the Old and New Testaments
* Three french hens - Faith Hope and Charity
* Four calling birds - the four Gospels
* Five golden rings - the first five books of the Old Testament containing the history of man's fall from grace
* Six geese a-laying - the six days of Creation
* Seven swans a-swimming - seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
* Eight maids a-milking - the eight Beatitudes
* Nine ladies dancing - nine choirs of Angels
* Ten lords a-leaping - the ten Commandments
* Eleven piper's piping - the eleven faithful Apostles
* Twelve drummers drumming - the twelve points of belief in the Apostle's Creed

8 Lessons on ‘The Tree That Tells’

A Christmas tree in a Christian home can be a tree that tells. It should not only set the mood for Christmas, but should also tell the story... **First**, the tree itself should be evergreen, a pine or a spruce, to remind us that life is everlasting. **Second**, every tree should have a star upon it. It was a star that guided the three Wise Men on their way to Bethlehem. **Third**, every tree should have upon it a boat. The ship has been a symbol of The Church for centuries. The Church, like a boat, sets sail across the waters of life, sometimes rough and sometimes smooth. **Fourth**, our Christmas tree should have upon it a bird. The bird is a reminder of the Holy Spirit. **Fifth**, a fish should hang on the Christmas tree. The fish is a symbol of Jesus, since he told his disciples: "follow me and I will make you fishers of men." In the early church, Christians placed the fish symbol on their homes as a sign to traveling Christians that there were members of their own faith living there. **Sixth,** every tree should have an angel. The song of the angels awakened the shepherds in the field to announce the birth of Jesus Christ. **Seventh**, every tree should have various colored spheres upon it, to signify the diversity of the world in which we live. **Eighth,** a tree should have a paper chain or garland wrapped around it because we are all bound together under nations and people by the love of God. Finally, there should be many lights on the tree to tell us that the light of God is reflected by people throughout the world. www.domestic-church.com